



**VOTE:  
WHAT  
FOR?**

*Robert Lynn*

This pamphlet is dedicated to Tom Brown  
an old friend and comrade of mine.  
I learned much from him.  
My thoughts and admiration for him  
Will only cease when I become deceased.

R. Lynn

## Introduction

The following pamphlet is not meant to be a panorama of a possible future ideal world. It's meant to be an observation on present day society with a view to changing it as I believe it to be an insane asylum. It is so gigantic that most of us do not notice it. Most people have visions of a society of their desires but because of miseducation their views are frustrated. They have been so indoctrinated by their "teachers"; in the classroom, from the pulpit, from parents who came through the same sausage machine indoctrination. From the cradle to the grave they are nurtured and subjected to varying degrees of subservience. In consequence they sniff for their master like an obedient pet dog. They seek their messiah, divine or mundane.

If I could lead anyone into the land of milk and honey, I wouldn't do it. Why? Because if I could lead anyone into it then I could lead them out of it. No one has the power to give you what you want without having the power to snuff it out. I want to be neither a mister somebody nor a mister nobody but merely a mister this body; neither to be possessed nor dispossessed. If I could change the social system by myself I would do so. But because of my incompetence I need allies: I need more strength; I need you. It is self interest but an interest which is mutual. At present I hack at the social system as best I can like laboriously cutting away with pick and shovel at a mountain to get to my destination; Forever trying to muster sufficient dynamite in order to blow it out of existence. So I speak to you, especially you of the working class who have an immediate economic interest in destroying our maniacal social system. Economic freedom is the concrete base of all other freedoms. Without economic freedom all other freedoms are merely spooks.

I ask you then to rid yourself of spooks. Organise to achieve real freedom from your compulsory asylum. Karl Marx once exhorted the working class to unite. "Workers of the world unite, you have nothing to lose but your chains, you have a world to win." However, he spent so much time in the British Museum that it would seem he had forgotten to advise them where to unite.

In my pamphlet I try to show the futility of organising in political parties. I advise industrial and social organisation: A do-it-yourself movement and make the politicians redundant. Send them and the tycoons of industry into the museums of antiquity along with the spinning wheel and the bronze axe. One last word: I hope after reading the pamphlet you may find the rational core within the mystical shell and boycott the vote.

*Robert Lynn*

## VOTE! WHAT FOR?

i

Every four or five years the electorate are credited with responsibility to determine their own welfare. Election fever pervades the bulk of our society, fostered by the press, the radio, T.V. and the general canvassing for votes. Programmes are laid before the Jock Tamsons, the Henry Dubbs and the Jimmy Higgins. Unfortunately many people have short memories. They therefore fail to see that the programmes are the same as the past; perhaps with a little subtle twist or 'doctored up' flowery language. After polling day the election results being known, the electorate wait with expectations of change, favourable or otherwise depending on one's outlook. Without going too far back in 1945 a Labour government was elected. Millions of men and women expected a new and more just social system to prevail: a system in which they would have security and well-being, in which no longer would there be a small minority living in the lap of luxury whilst many lived in abject poverty. Nationalisation was to be the cure for all our ills. This was soon shown to be illusory. Working people still had to struggle to prevent their standard of life depreciating. Within six days of the Labour government taking office it sent conscript troops into the Surrey docks to break a ten weeks old strike against a wage cut. In doing this Labour had conveniently forgotten the amendment they had made concerning military blacklegs:

"No conscript should be required to take duty in aid of the civil power in connection with a trade dispute, or perform in consequence of a trade dispute any civil or industrial duty customarily performed by a civilian."

*Labour amendment to the Military Training Bill, Hansard, May 12th 1939.*

One could go on about Labour's role and the role of Harold Wilson's government's anti working class activity. One could go on about the Tories and Liberals supporting nationalisation when it suited their purpose in and out of office. The Tories nationalised the Post Office. Although the railways were not nationalised until 1946 under Labour, the first act of Parliament authorising nationalisation was passed in 1844 under Peel's Tory



government. It was introduced by Gladstone, President of the Board of Trade. It was not inaugurated at the time for economic and political reasons but remained on the statute book for political expediency. The Port of London Authority was set up by the Tories. Labour, Tories and Liberals have continually changed their policies to suit the needs of big business. Those who pay the piper call the tune.

Too much space would be required to give convincing evidence of the corrupt and sinister nature or naivety of politicians. That is to say volumes would be required to treat with the Thatchers, the Steels, the Kinnocks, the Tony Benns, etc., etc., so allow me to be objective rather than subjective. Objectivity requires a little deeper thought but it is more pertinent and in the end more convincing.

What about our so-called intellectual giants and experts? An M.P. will stand before a constituency of all grades of workers: busmen, railwaymen, lorry drivers, joiners, carpenters, electricians, plumbers, engineers, painters, platers, welders, draughtsmen, miners, nurses, doctors, demolishers, scaffolders, dustmen, farmers, tailors; you name it. Many varied jobs, some of which take many years of study; and these quacks either by commission or omission purport to know all and sundry. They will pass laws on seagoing without ever having been to sea, on mining without ever having been down a mine, on shipbuilding without ever having entered a yard, on farming without ever having worked the land, and a host of many things from childbirth to gravedigging.

Many M.P.s are lawyers or ex-military men. As there are approximately 630 M.P.s in the House of Commons it is at least theoretically possible to have 630 lawyers or 630 ex-military men in the 'House'. What would they know about industry? They may pass laws to curb the initiative of workers in the interests of a privileged minority but that would be their stretch, except in time of war when they would even conscript your granny into industry. But this is only a fraction and superficial part of the facade of political democracy. Lloyd George many moons ago stated: "Parliament has no control over the executive; it is pure fiction". The faceless ones, the top brass of the civil service who never stand for election rule the roost on behalf of the tycoons.

Production in our society is geared to suit the 'god' of Rent, Interest and Profit and it is the job of the faceless ones to perpetuate this situation. The incredible ignorance in which M.P.s are kept was illustrated when Winston Churchill, disclosed in Parliament on October 23rd 1952 that Britain's first atom bomb explosion in Montebeliow had cost over £100 million, admitted that as an old parliamentarian he was rather astonished that the sum could be dispensed without Parliament being made aware of it.

Behind Parliament and the Cabinet are the other state institutions. There's the Monarch to whom state power legally belongs, who convenes and

dissolves Parliaments, who gives insignia of office to Cabinet Ministers and whose assent is necessary for any bill to become law. Their interventions in current political affairs are usually revealed a decade or two later in the form of memoirs by some indiscreet politician or embittered hanger-on. There is the House of Lords which retains the right to delay acts of Parliament. There's the armed forces; an instrument of imperialism abroad and of repression at home should the police force prove inadequate. This prevails no matter which party is in power. There's the police and the secret police who open mail, tap phones and exercise violence in pursuit of their aims. Parliament has neither knowledge nor control of these tyrannical forces - *a la* gestapo. Questions about them in Parliament are always evaded as being not in the public interest. Then of course we have the judiciary - the blood and sinews of class rule. Liberals may protest about recent decrees of the South African government. Little do they realise that the British government would not need such legislation. There are more than enough acts on the statute book already, to cope with any potential radical opposition. To ensure the perpetuation of this state of affairs the ruling class directly controls the day-to-day administration of the State through a carefully selected Civil Service. This non-elected body is completely insulated from any democratic control. Even Tory ministers have been amazed at how little is their control over their own staff. All major decisions taken by the executive are largely based on the professional advice of the civil service; administrative, economic or military.

In a revealing letter to the Times, the Tory Minister of Agriculture, Mr R.H. Dorman Smith wrote:

"One of the very first things my permanent-secretary taught me was: whatever you may think of me, or any other civil servant here, you cannot sack us. I was amazed to find that a minister had no individual control over his staff from the newest junior clerk or typist right up to the top."

You want to vote. What for? Let me tell a little anecdote. There was an old spinster in America who had a Pekinese dog. She developed such an affection for it that she became anxious about its welfare when she would finally pass away. Consequently she consulted her stockbroker to arrange for the Peke to have shares so that it would be cared for after her demise. Finally came the inevitable day when the old lady did pass away. So the Peke became a capitalist, a shareholder having workers continue to maintain it. So then in theory many capitalists could be Pekineses, Chimps or other members of the animal kingdom. Dogs could be taught to balance on a seesaw and chimps be taught to ride a bicycle. But a chimp could not make a bicycle. Man is the only tool producing being and that is what raises him above the animal kingdom.



You want to vote. So you may vote for an M.P. who will be subject to control of the Civil Service top brass, who will administer an economic and social system on behalf of the capitalist class, some of whom may be Pekineses, chimpanzees or Donald Duck. Is it worth it?

The Scots economist Adam Smith in his *Wealth of Nations* stated: "All wealth is created by labour applied to the raw materials of the earth". The workforce is indispensable. Politicians, capitalists - industrial or commercial - landlords and bankers can be made redundant. Only the power of people can change the insane asylum. And change it they must by organising at the place where they are 'exploited' (a euphemistic term for legal robbery) and that is at the point of production. Workers run the country but they do not own it or control it. It's time they did.

That's why 'I Won't Vote' and continue to urge the expropriation of the expropriators. Organise now in the factories, the workshops, the yards, the mines, on the land, in all places of production and distribution. Your reward will be to win a World.

Many people will agree with my destructive criticism of our social system even if reluctantly. However, they may say "What do you offer as an alternative?" As an anarchist it would not merely be against my principles but it would also be presumptuous for me to attempt to lay down a blue print for a society which has still to be born. However our own form of society did not always prevail and historically speaking is but a mere child. Society has existed for thousands of years but our own form was born within the womb of feudalism only several hundred years ago. Although feudalism was a fetter on development of economic progress it took a revolution to get rid of it. It was replaced by the capitalist mode of production which prevails throughout the modern world. The blood and sinews of this system is the profit motive; the acquisition of rent, interest and profit accrued by the appropriation of the surplus value created by Labour. Labour power is sold as a commodity on the market like any other commodity. But labour power as a commodity has one peculiar characteristic about it: it can produce more than it's own value. So the worker is fleeced of the fruits of labour. The worker works so many hours which would maintain him; the surplus hours creates the fruits for the capitalist. It's all nice and legal. The political and the legal machines are the bulwark of capitalism. Since private property presented itself upon the stage of history the state machine became the natural ally of the propertied classes; Chattel slavery; feudalism; laissez faire capitalism; monopoly and/or state capitalism have all had their respective types of government. There may be superficial changes but the basic purpose remains the same: Despotism, Coercion, Exploitation.

Consequently a new social principle must pertain. A social principle which is by no means my brain child: otherwise I would be remembered by posterity. As aforesaid, society has existed for thousands of years. And prior to the rise of private property society existed without political government. The organisation in pre-political society consisted of gens or clans based on kinship. The gens was a true democracy based on economic equality. All talk about democracy in our society is unadulterated balderdash. All freedoms, liberties, the right to vote, free speech are merely platitudes. What use is free speech to sheep? They only bleat. What use is freedom to enter a five star hotel if one is on the dole? Real freedom is economic freedom; to have free access to the means of wealth production. Within the gens there was no private property and no class had power to dominate as in our society where the means of wealth are owned and controlled by a minority caste. There were no class antagonisms because there were no minority caste. There were no class antagonism because there were no classes. This social system had no means of coercion. There were no policemen or crimes against property as everything was commonly owned and controlled. If all belongs to all how can one steal from oneself? There were no prisons as there were no injustices perpetrated by avaricious property owners. Rape; murder; theft; sex perversions were completely foreign to gentile society.

Of course some lame brain will accuse me of wanting to put the clock back and transplant ourselves back to a hunting or fishing society. I merely point to the principle. The principle would be born again but on a higher economic plane. As aforesaid previous social systems have been born within the womb of the old. Industrial and technological development will sow the seeds of a new society; the embryonic form must develop now. The adversaries say to us "You are utopian, you cannot have anarchism overnight." We know that. Everything has to be built up. But now is the time to do so. Anarchism is the regation of political society so evidently we don't want to build a political party. Our methods must be in harmony with our aims. Our aims are social or common ownership and control of the means of wealth production to be organised on a voluntary basis. Commodity production will be thrown on the dungheap of history: Production for use and need will replace commodity production for profit. Consequently wage labour will be abolished and the administration of things will replace the government of men.

Our methods are therefore diametrically opposed to the methods of political parties. Our forms of organisation are therefore essentially different. Instead of organising on a political or geographical basis, we organise on an industrial basis. Let me hasten to say not all anarchists would agree with me but their diverse points of view would merely be a difference of appreciation.



There would be no disagreement on fundamentals. All anarchists would agree that the State is the principle enemy of the individual and society. I confess that I have a bias in favour of the industrial workers, not merely because I was one myself but because they are in my opinion in the most favourable position of changing society. Hence the reason why I put emphasis on industrial organisation. This means of organisation was termed anarcho-syndicalism. However perhaps because this was deemed a clumsy mouthful it was finally termed syndicalism. To be as brief and concise as practical please allow me to say that syndicalism derived like anarchism in general from the experience of the working class. It was not the product of intellectuals in universities. Syndicalists maintain that by organising industrially they will be creating the new society within the womb of the old.

Unlike politicians who claim the right to govern everything, the industrial syndicates elected on the spot by their respective workforce and subject to recall like the present shop stewards movement would administer the affairs of their own respective industries. The miners would run the mines, the shipbuilding workers would regulate their industry. The railmen: the railways, the textile worker: the mills, and so on. We advocate organisation at the point of production, embracing all workers in any factory, yard, workshop, mine, depot or what have you. This transcends the trade unions like the craft unions or the younger unions like the transport and general or municipal unions which have no working relationship and are organised in a hotchpot or higgledy piggledy motley crew. At present workers in trade unions in any given industry producing the same finished product are organised or should I say disorganised in a host of different unions: the shipyards are a classical example. All the workforce contribute to the production of ships. Yet the workforce are divided into different unions; the engineering union, boilermakers, electricians, carpenters and so on causing inter-union rivalries and constitutional blacklegging. Syndicalists advocate one union for one industry. Organised in this manner shipbuilding workers would be federated to a district federation; each federation of districts would be federated to a national federation of shipbuilding workers. This pertains throughout each industry and service; textiles, transport, power, agriculture, sanitation, mining, distribution, construction and so on. Then all national industrial federations are dovetailed into a national confederation of labour. Here we have an organisation competent to manoeuvre its forces to any part or to an entire industry to express industrial solidarity to any section of workers on strike. One of the great weaknesses of the trade unions is its lack of any ultimate aim: No apparent reason for its existence outside of trying to get some more crumbs from the rich man's table. Or to endeavour to get a shorter working day. But it has no goal to achieve. It leads to a cul-de-sac.

Syndicalism's ultimate aim is not a wage increase but the abolition of the wage system by voting with your feet; by marching into the factories, the workshops, the yards, the mines, appropriating the transport and all means of communication. This would be the social general strike: the revolution of reconstruction. Every strike is seen as a training period towards this end. The strike weapon is of most importance in the armoury of the working class. It is significant to recall that it was the strike weapon which gave workers the legal right to vote. As aforesaid I cannot and will not present any blueprint for a society still to be born. But we can learn from history; past and contemporary, for I am going to offer some food for thought and I shall draw an inference in keeping with my analysis and ask for your consideration. I have given a brief analysis regarding the political plane in the first part of this pamphlet. Now for an analysis of the economic scene. For the sake of brevity and limitation, I shall treat only with our own contemporary history.

The working class being organised in trade unions have failed to recognise the co-relation of the movement of capitalism laissez-faire to state and/or monopoly capitalism and the movement of the trade unions from craft guilds to labour bureaucracy. Some people blame the leadership for the decline of militant unionism. The treachery and timidity of the so-called leadership cannot be excused. The so-called right wing leadership have been ousted and replaced by so-called lefties. These in turn have been bitterly attacked by their previous supporters. In consequence we get disgruntled trade unionists saying "Ach, they're just like the politicians, once they get in they feather their own nests." In the first part of this pamphlet I stated that instead of persistently criticising the behaviour of politicians which could go on until doomsday a more objective approach is required. Similarly on the economic plane an objective approach to economic organisation goes to the roots which can be torn assunder if called for.

Most of the early British unions were craft unions; they organised themselves in accordance with the tools they used. If a man used certain tools he may join a sheet metal workers union. If he used wood working tools he may find himself in a carpenters union. The type of tool used usually determined the type of organisation a man would link himself with. This may have been logical in the middle ages when a craftsman produced a finished commodity of his own tools and labour; but in the age of the gas turbine it is obsolete. It is a relic of a bygone age. Every commodity is a social product necessitating a host of different skills and varying types of labour. This should reflect the syndicalist declaration: "Not craft unionism; but industrial unionism." To create class conscious solidarity to the widest extent, workers must be organised as a class in one union for each industry crossing craft, skilled and semi-skilled barriers. To sustain the greatest interest and



solidarity the union branch should be at the point of production. This method or organisation is in harmony with our aims; an equalitarian class-less society. Trade unions have their branches organised territorially. Result: a man may work in Clydebanks but joins a branch in Bridgeton where he sleeps. In his branch he may never meet a fellow workmate. The workers problems basically arise at his place of work. There he can discuss on the spot the question of factory conditions; sanitation, wages, degree of control, the arrogance of some petty straw boss or what have you. In a trade union branch a worker may meet fellow members in different industries, none of them with any affinity to his job. In consequence anything which may be discussed at his branch could be foreign to him.

The spirit of the trade unions have gone although their form lingers on; a form which are like fossils of a dead past. Their friendly welfare society vitilates their militancy. Accumulation of funds due to their mutual aid character gives them investment in industry and so on interest in capitalist society. This encourages the climbing up of the social ladder and nurtures opportunism. Large salaries become attractions to the labour leader type, who often write for the capitalist press and augment their income in diverse ways. This gives them bourgeois aspirations: they eat different food, live in different houses, have a different life style from the workers *a la* Scargill, Scanlon etc. Any sympathy they may have had for the worker dies a natural death. Their hopes are no longer for an equalitarian society. Their visions are to rub shoulders with the rich and attend Royal Garden Parties. How many trade union leaders have accepted a Knighthood?

Officials, secretaries, organisers should be paid the district rate of wages of their members, and there should be only the minimum of paid organisers, Doesn't most of the necessary and most important work get done by voluntary unpaid shop stewards and others on the job? Organising and forever struggling to improve the lot of their fellow workers and themselves? Let those who seek knighthoods leave us to draw the moral from it. We still have the integrity of brave hearts with a different vision.

The origin and function of the political state was and still is to protect the interest of the ruling class. No genuine working class organisation can collaborate with the state. When the unions were being built the state persecuted them; now it has embraced them within the machinery of the State. Union leaders sit on committees, from Labour Exchange committees chopping unemployment benefit to Royal Commissions for suppressing colonial workers. Union bosses even appear on the Honours List. Conscientious objectors during war are confronted by tribunals with trade

union representatives present. How ludicrous can one get. No-one can serve the State, the executive committee of the ruling class and the working class which it keeps in subjection through its ownership of the means of wealth production. During the war the trade union leader Ernest Bevin acted as Minister of Labour to the capitalist government. He betrayed every principle and gain achieved by working class struggle. Bevin made the Bureaucratic blunder of sending too many miners into the armed forces. As an attempt to remedy this, his brain child was the 'Bevin Ballot Scheme.' This scheme meant that apprentices would have their apprenticeship suspended by means of their names being brought out of a hat so to speak. During this suspension a term would be served in the mines. This brain child turned out to be a freak on a par with the freak mentality of he who devised it. The apprentices struck. It was a general strike of all of the apprentices. I was on the apprentices strike committee representing the apprentices of Yarrows Shipyard. In my ignorance of that time I had some leanings towards the communist party. The C.P. were opposed to the strike as their Russian fatherland was now involved in the war. This opposition of the C.P. and their participation in joint production committees assisting in getting workers fined for late coming and absenteeism was the beginning of my serious political thought. My leanings towards the Communist party was jettisoned.

The apprentices strike was victorious after about ten days. Ten days that shook the bungling bureaucratic world of Bevin and his masters. Nothing but hindrance comes from government departments, yet we still get some lame brains talking like a budgie reiterating it's a good thing to have some of our own kind in the government. Those Judases try to cut our strength where it lies; at the point of production. Every advance made by the working class has been due to the strike weapon in one form or another. Unions were born by the strike weapon; matured by it and declined when they abandoned it for class collaboration and parliamentary activity. They try to hoodwink us by saying that parliament and the government have given higher wages or a shorter working day to the workers. This is an illusion. When British coal was in great demand, after World War 1, the miners demanded an increase in wages and a six hour day. The coal owners could not afford a stoppage. But the miners were hoodwinked by appeasement: a royal commission and an act of parliament granted them a wage increase and a seven hour day. Their industrial strength would have assured them a six hour day. In 1926 when economic conditions were less favourable parliament scrapped the seven hour day for an eight hour day.

However, the syndicalist emphasis on the strike weapon does not mean approval of trade union methods. These methods are obsolete on a par with the obsolete structure of trade unions. Syndicalism is flexible and varied in its methods. For space reasons only some of these can be dealt with.



The lightning strike is much used by workers who haven't been hoodwinked by their misleaders. Before a trade union strikes, protracted negotiations take place. Months notice are given; in consequence the strike is postponed. This gives the enemy breathing space to organise stocks and transport by police if necessary. Agreements are held as being sacred. Agreements which are farcical; agreements can only be genuine between equals. The workers' misleaders make agreements on their behalf when a gun is held to their heads so to speak. The employers metaphorical gun is their ownership and control of the means of production. For the workers to be victorious they have to turn the employers own guns upon them; they have to be in control. Speed like lightning is essential.

The highly centralised trade unions put a fetter on workers activity. The worker then often has to strike unofficially, i.e. without the approval of union bureaucracy. Certain sections of an industry at some given time may offer conditions temporarily favourable for the worker to strike. The guerilla strike comes into operation. In the engineering industry aircraft may be booming, but vehicle construction, instrument making, machine making, shipbuilding and a host of other branches of engineering may be in decline depending on market demand. Centralisation does not permit local autonomy. The temporary favourable position of the aviation workers cannot be acted upon. They have to seek permission to strike constitutionally from the bureaucrats outside of their place of work. Their favourable situation goes down the drain.

Syndicalism is organisation from the bottom upward; not from the top down. Each branch has its own autonomy. All branches are federated in districts, all districts federated into a national federation of labour. This is federalism; the opposite of bureaucratic centralism. Federalism fosters class unity and induces the "sympathetic strike". Centralism causes one union to blackleg against another constitutionally. In shipbuilding, engineers may go on strike, platers, carpenters, electricians, sheet metal workers and a host of others in the same industry continue to work putting a spoke in the wheel for the engineers: This is unadulterated blacklegging. The chickenhearted are shielded by their constitutionalism. Trade unions are like a family divided against itself; they are unbrotherly brothers. Syndicalism unites the workers into one force disseminating the idea that an injury to one is an injury to all.

Sabotage has lost much of its sinister connotations for those slim weak kneed "Labour fakers" from the time when the French workers put a Sabot (wooden shoe) into machinery believing machinery was a source of creating unemployment. A humorous application of the sabotage strike was adopted by the I.W.W. (Industrial Workers of the World) in America. In a canning

factory the I.W.W. were operating in the section where labels were affixed to cans; cheap labels were affixed to expensive cuts of salmon resulting in the poor districts of the world getting a temporary delicacy bonus. Several methods of the strike weapon could be designated as sabotage: The Boycott whereby organised workers withdraw their patronage from chain stores to assist a claim made by employees of the chain stores is a form of sabotage; it could also be termed the "sympathetic strike". Another form of sabotage is when transport workers take the buses from the depots, take other workers to their work and the general public to their respective destination without collecting fares.

Railway workers in France were forbidden to strike by law. Perhaps this was to enable the government in time of war to mobilise troops without obstacles. To illustrate Dicken's character Mr. Bumble who said, "If that is the law, then the law is an ass". The French syndicalists pointed out to their fellow workers the absurdity of the law appertaining to the railways where there were so many rules and regulations. If these were strictly adhered to there would have been complete chaos. How ironical that the anarchist syndicalist should point this out. Anarchy is supposed to mean chaos according to the adversaries of anarchism. Common sense and everyday practice on the job maintained order. The workers were sharp to observe the syndicalists observation and it's obvious underlying meaning. The "work to rule strike" was born. The railway workers decided to carry out the law to the letter. One French law demands that the driver makes sure of the safety of the train before crossing a bridge. So express engine drivers stopped their trains at every bridge to consult the guard. The trains were late, the law put in a ludicrous light, the workers claim successful. Another rule states that tickets must be examined on both sides. The rule says nothing about busy periods like city rush hours or holiday periods. Again, working to rule made the law look an ass. The workers turned the enemy's own guns upon them and gained a victory. Syndicalists treat increasing control over the job by the workforce as defence against the perpetual tendency of the employers to depreciate workers standards of living. Syndicalists promote and participate in all manners of direct action in their class interests and even transcend class interests in aid of humanity against the inhumane forces of government. The "Social Strike" has been used against war as in the Catalanian workers general strike against the Moroccan war in July 1901 and in the German armament workers conference in Erfurt which decided to terminate the production of armaments which legally murdered men and to force their employers to convert their factories to produce socially necessary products. This resolution was maintained for two years until broken by reformist trade unions. Another example of the social strike happened in Spain. The Spanish government contemplated on having a womens prison built in Barcelona.



The building workers of Catalonia refused to build it. The government unsuccessfully sought other workers from other parts of Spain. The prison site remained vacant until foreign labour was imported.

It is not the intention of syndicalists to perpetuate the class struggle. It is their intention to end it by destroying the capitalist system and its concomitant monster; the state machine. Then the new society will be born and it's midwife will be the 'Social General Strike. This is not to be identified with the caricature of the British General Strike of 1926. Before that strike the employers and their government were given nine months notice; more than ample time to prepare stock, transport, police. Then some workers were asked to strike. Although thousands more joined the strike it was predestined to fail. Why? Because the workers adopted the trade union method of striking: they left the industries, mines, depots, power, railways, yards, food stores, transport and all means of communication in the hands of their class enemy. The syndicalist general strike is not passive; it deplores indolence and standing at street corners, watching the goggle box at home or in the beer tents, browsing in libraries, waiting in hope and finally after several months being driven back to work by hunger and frustration. The syndicalist method is to vote with your feet by marching into the factories, the workshops, all places of production and taking possession of their rightful heritage. Ownership and control of the means of wealth production should be the goal of the working class. The methods of the syndicalists and their form of organisation should be looked upon as signposts indicating the way we are travelling. Should the working class reach their destination by these signposts then political administration shall be placed in the museums of antiquity. Administration shall then be conducted by producers and consumers co-operatives distributing the respective needs of the community. I can hear the reverberations of the voices of the politicians lamenting: "You forget about the armed forces." I forget nothing. In modern society it takes about ten industrial workers to maintain a soldier's military value. It is workers who transport the food, fuel and other essentials to the army. The power workers supply electricity. Remember in recent years how power cuts have caused much confusion. The power workers have the ball at their feet. They could cut the electricity supply from the army and the police stations. The politicians still utter their pessimism. Ironically, the so-called parliamentary socialists must expect at least a fair percentage of soldiers to assist in voting capitalism out of existence. This means class consciousness within the army. Would this class consciousness vanish if the workers took possession of the means of production? An old friend and comrade of mine once said; "A fistful of practice is worth a bagful of theory."

In the summer of 1920 the Italian metal workers were presented with a notice of reduction of wages and a lock out to enforce it. Syndicalist ideas must have filtered through to other workers for the workers instinctively and spontaneously reacted to this threat by locking out the employers. The workers took possession of the engineering factories. The factories were barricaded and barbed-wired; even electrified wire being used. Workers militia were organised and the armaments produced in armaments works were transported to the factories. How were the workers fed? No problem. The agricultural collectives or syndicates collected food for the strikers and the transport syndicates delivered it to the factories. The government, the army, the police and fascists were powerless. George Seldes, a bourgeois journalist, reported: not a skull was cracked; commotion everywhere except in Italy. Day by day more factories were being occupied by the workers. Soon five hundred thousand stay-in strikers were engaged in building steamships, automobiles, forging tools and manufacturing a host of useful things. The bosses were absentees and peace reigned. After the fears of tourists waned they stealthily came out doors to witness the occasion. It is an unadulterated lie disseminated by parliamentary socialists that the Italian fascists ousted the strikers out of the factories in 1920 and then marched on Rome and seized power. The facts are: Mussolini and his militia were helpless and as harmless as babes in arms. To gain popularity Mussolini paid lip service verbally and in his paper wrote in defence of the strikers. Events proved that he spoke and wrote with tongue in cheek. Events also proved that the syndicalists were in a minority. In consequence the workers did not go the "whole hog". The significance of their action did not fully penetrate their minds. They finally returned the factories to their legal owners. Note, I did not say their morally justified owners. The workers like most the world over due to incultation and indoctrination must have been unable to discern the difference between legality and morality. They returned to parliamentary methods. Mussolini then took this advantage and marched on Rome to take power in 1922 not in 1920 as the politicians declared. They not only fabricated events, they leapfrogged history a couple of years.

A similar situation occurred in France in 1936. The stay-in strikes of the French workers had the same lack of bloodshed due to the strategic position of the workers being in the factories. The rivers of bloodshed predicted by the parliamentary socialist were conspicuous by their absence. Leon Blum, the French prime minister of the time stated later that no attempt was made to oust the workers from the factories because of the danger to the State such action would cause. Governments prefer to shed workers blood when they



are defenceless in the streets.

The Italian stay-in strikes prevented a wage reduction and gained a wage increase. In France, the strikers gained a wage increase, a forty hour week, treble time for overtime and holidays with pay. These gains were subsequently lost because instead of continuing to rely on their own strength the workers sought future progress through legal channels *a la* political action. The workers had not yet fully grasped the role played by bourgeois law. It is not the syndicalist aim to return the means of production and distribution to the employers but to retain them in the hands of the workers. To annihilate bourgeois law in the process and establish common ownership and control of all means of life. This means the abolition of the wage system, the core of exploitation; to be replaced by the distribution of utilities according to need.

One of the most important lessons to be learned from our own contemporary history is the example of the Spanish collectives during the civil war 1936-39. They proved the practicalities and intrinsic power of workers control of industry. On the outbreak of the fascist coup d'etat most of the Spanish capitalists and landowners allied themselves with Franco and deserted the industries in the vast areas where the workers had triumphed. Many large industries were owned by foreign capital and in these the managers and directors had fled. Workers control regenerated the vigour necessary to continue the administration of industries and agriculture on a socialised plane, Workers committees were formed, the unemployed, set to work and services improved. Barcelona and Catalonia, being the stronghold of anarchism showed the utmost initiative in the formulation of collectives. Within days the transport workers took over the British owned transport system. The syndicates of health, gas, water were immediately successful in their respective undertakings. All the damage caused by the initial street fighting had been repaired. Well over 600 unemployed were set to work. The tramways, buses, two undergrounds and two funicular railways were unified in one transport system. Throughout Spain the three main railways were unified under the joint control of the revolutionary unions (C.N.T.) and the trade unions (U.G.T) The textile and wood industries were particularly successful. Even in smaller and less highly organised services there was admirable success. Taxis carried the red and black flag of syndicalism. Hotels and restaurants bore the initials C.N.T. Small shop artisans united to form syndicates as in the case of the optical workers syndicate or certain hairdressers who pooled their resources and reduced their working hours. Agriculture exemplified the benefits of workers "socialisation" (not to be confused with nationalisation). Land socialisation began in Aragon which had a libertarian tradition, then spread to Levante, Andalusia, Catalonia and Castile. George Orwell wrote a book *Homage to Catalonia* eulogising the

anarchists. Orwell fought in the militias in Spain. The agricultural collectives were entirely voluntary. Any peasant who wished to remain outside the collectives was allotted his share of the newly acquired land. Technical advances were made. Modern machinery was acquired and output increased. Land was carefully selected to produce appropriate crops efficiently. In spite of the fact that many peasants were in the militia at the front the harvests were substantially increased. In distribution, the principle "to each according to his needs" was applied. Parents with a child or children received more than a childless household. Each household received according to circumstances. The people learned to live well without the use of money. The aged and infirm were cared for. Mutual aid took the place of chill charity. The health syndicate successfully operated the administration of the medical service. Individual payment was now non-existent. The medics were remunerated by the collective. Dispensaries and clinics were formed, even in remote villages where previously they were conspicuous by their absence. The mansions of landowners were justifiably transformed into schools, children's homes and rest homes for the aged. In our topsy turvy gigantic lunatic asylum workers build mansions and then live in hovels, build luxury liners but their pockets are not lined enough to sail on the liners. Giant steps were taken in the pursuit of education. An education dissimilar to the education practices in our own conspiratorial and profligate society. The Spanish people would not be subjected to a drum and trumpet version of history or balderdash about what this king or that queen is reputed to have done. Remember we were taught that "King Alfred" burnt a scone? If this has any significance in history then I am perplexed. For in the past, remote and recent I have burned a few pots and my rewards have been a tongue thrashing and a severe slap of the wrist. In our society the mode of education changes from time to time but the purpose of education remains the same. Education changes with change in industrial and technological development. Decimals had to be taught in order for a worker to be able to read a micrometer among other needs of industry. The purpose however remains the same: A small section are educated to be masters. The majority are educated to be efficient and servile wage slaves.

It is beyond the scope of this essay to make any reference to the revolts in Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia and their spontaneous organisations. However suffice it for me to say, like the Spanish workers they did not get the backing of their counterparts in other countries. Hence their defeat. Nothing is absolutely inevitable as a mechanistic mode of thought would have us believe. Nothing ventured nothing gained. Only tendencies can be observed and described. Absolute inevitability is metaphysical reasoning *a la* Hegelian dialectics; philosophical crap, to use a working class colloquial expression.



The Spanish working class did not have the support of the international working class. Inversely the capitalist class had the support of their counterparts either directly or indirectly. Of course much foreign capital was invested in Spain. The so called socialist fatherland was no exception in their sabotage of the Spanish revolution. They sent arms to Spain but expected payment in gold; it wasn't as a gesture of solidarity. They sent high octane aeroplane fuel to Italy which was used against the Spanish workers. This was at the time when the avowedly capitalist countries had sanctions against Italy because of their war with Abyssinia.

However, in spite of all this anarchism still lives on in the deeper inner recesses of the hearts of the Spanish people. I have never been in Spain but I have had personal contact with a few of the Spanish workers militia. When I was in London at an anarchist Summer School or perhaps it was a conference, a friend and comrade of the Syndicalist Workers Federation took me to meet Garcia Pradas who fought in the Spanish Militia. Other Spaniards came to visit Garcia. These men were not romantics; they realised that more important than being at the front was what was happening behind the front: The reconstructing of society based on freedom and equality. In their hearts the revolution will never be lost. The few examples I have mentioned about the methods, structure and aims of anarchist syndicalism I know have been limited.

I can only hope that you dear reader will exercise your imagination and your potential vision bearing in mind my remarks that our society has not always existed; it was born in feudalism and will finally decay (at this very moment it is decadent: since people are producing an abundance and yet living in want) and then it will go for the long sleep: It will be dead. Who will shed tears? Just as one would have to be very warm hearted indeed to love the bath water after the baby had tumbled out of it, similarly one would have to be exuberantly intoxicated with a perverse notion that if a carnivorous monster lives long enough it may get to love those it devours and become a paragon of virtue. I would conclude that only those who have an inborn fear of having to cope with life on their own merit would shed tears. Fear not dear reader you don't have to stretch your imagination any great degree. Observe reality, don't just gape at it. Can't you see all around you poverty in the midst of plenty. Food being destroyed or buried to maintain or increase prices. Quack economists call it over production. In fact it is under-consumption. The necessities are there, but the people cannot reach them. Why? Because slimy megalomaniacs control the nose bags. You can observe the gigantic strides made in technics and science. We have automation and cybernetics: Machines producing machines. We are therefore in a position to produce an abundance far beyond the imagination of the forebears. Even fifty years ago Sir John Boyd Orr of the (UNESCO) stated that if one per cent of the labour which is used in

the production of armaments was used in the production of food there would be more than enough to feed all of the peoples of the world. Not one government including the so called socialist fatherland offered this contribution. The objective conditions are favourable to present us with our needs: The labour power, the raw materials, industry, technics and scientific know-how are all at our disposal. What is now required is the subjective conditions: the peoples recognition that there is something radically wrong with our social system and the need to change it.

## VI.

Again dear reader, imagine a people realising the necessity of a revolt for fundamental change. They vote with their feet by marching into the factories and commandeering the means of production. They seize the land, the yards, the mines, depots, the armaments factories, all means of communications: the radio, the press, the T.V. Imagine it being broadcast in every language that the British working class have taken over the economy of the country and all affairs are being administered by committees elected by the workers who will be subject to recall at any given moment like the present shop stewards movement. No bureaucratic soil for bureaucrats to fertilise. Politicians, bankers, landowners, capitalists industrial and commercial have been made redundant. As the French writer Victor Hugo once said; "There is no greater force in the world than the idea whose time has come." Fifty years have passed since the Spanish revolt and changes have taken place that may have seemed remote to many people just a year ago. Now we have witnessed events in Eastern Europe where Russian satellites have recalcitrated for their independence. Just as revolution is the boiling point of evolution this recalcitrance is not so sudden as it superficially seems. Unrest and repugnance has been festering like a boil for many years and has now come to a head. Let me hasten to say the gains they have made will be short lived unless they take and hold the means of wealth production. I discovered praise for the action of the workers in the Eastern bloc from a most unusual and unexpected source. When I was in the library last week Friday 6th July I found a copy of the *June Socialist Standard*; the official journal of the S.P.G.B. the Socialist Party of Great Britain. Either it had been left by accident or design. The Socialist Party always exhorted the workers not to take industrial or direct action because the military would be used against them. It is therefore interesting to note that in the editorial of the *June Standard* it states: events have occurred which socialists only one year ago would have been called utopians for predicting. The Berlin Wall has disappeared, genuine elections have taken place where one party rule used to exist. Inside the Russian Empire workers are joining the independent, non-state controlled trade



unions; even the army has formed one, pledging itself not to fire on the workers in the event of a military coup. The explosive developments of the months since the Tiananmen massacre demonstrate the rapidity with which historical change can take place. It also shows the power which arises from peaceful democratic organised action by workers who will no longer tolerate the conditions under which they are living. No doubt the first workers on the streets of Leipzig or Bucharest were called utopians by some doubters; surely they did not really imagine that they, mere unarmed civilians could defeat the might of the militarised state capitalist regime. But they did. History once again proved the cynics and doubters to be wrong.

This is the epitome of irony. The same argument could be levelled at the cynics and doubters of the S.P.G.B. who have always emphasised that power lies in parliament and the workers must seize this institution by the vote. Syndicalists don't want to seize parliament. They want the workers to seize the means of production. A people taking ownership and control of the means whereby they live cannot be subdued by any human agency. I leave it for you to judge dear reader. What is your choice; political action or industrial action and social action culminating in social administration by your own committees elected on the spot?

## EPILOGUE

It is claimed by so-called scientific socialists that surplus value or exploitation of labour is the underlying cause of all our social ills. This is typical of their shallow thinking. It is not just that exploitation exists but the fact that it is able to exist. And it is only able to exist because the State sanctions it. Anarchists recognise this so we reach different conclusions. Open any textbook on economics or any major work on economics by Adam Smith; Ricardo, Marx or whoever: They all start with production and then treat with the subject matter on consumption. You may say that is logical for before you can consume you must first produce. But before you can produce must you not feel the need of it. Wasn't it the need that drove man to hunt? So then consumption should govern the purpose and methods of production. This is in keeping with economic science. But dear reader you have come a fair way with me and I know that perhaps speaking on organisation in the political plane can be somewhat boring to many. So with great reluctance I enter into the arena of science and economics which I know can also be boring with a capital B. So-called scientific socialists are endeared to what they call natural laws without knowing what a natural law is. For me I say to hell with natural laws if they are unacceptable to me. I'm sure I'm not alone in taking this stance. Any student of natural science and philosophy knows how the ill effects of an inexorable law can be countered. Everyone at school has been

taught about the law of gravity discovered by Isaac Newton. Gravity makes physical bodies fall but the same gravity makes a balloon rise. Aviation with machines heavier than air is another example. Advances in production attributed to the law of division of labour by economists culminating in the capitalist mode of production was considered to be a necessary stage of development. Thus capitalism is deemed to be the outcome of an inexorable law; a historical necessity in the march towards human progress. This is analogous to primitive man knowing not the cause of rain, attributes it to the sacrifice he has immolated before the feet of his clay idol.

Dear reader as aforesaid, economics and science can be very boring except for those especially interested in those subjects. Furthermore for me to treat with those matters thoroughly this epilogue would become longer than the essay itself. Allow me therefore to say tersely, progress has been made in techniques, science and industry, not because of capitalism but despite capitalism. Unquestionably capitalism is a fact; it is a self-evident truth. But a truth which I wish to make an untruth. In the past many people could not see the wood for the trees. I state categorically that now that capitalism has become a blatant fetter on human progress; destroying tons of food, paying farmers to produce nothing; Placing our youth on the dunghheap of forgotten beings; and the manure of their symbolic corpses capitalism continues to fertilise. By its all pervading lunacy, the Jock Tamsons, the Jimmy Higgins, the Henry Dubbs, the great unwashed must see that the inexorable laws of capitalism must be trampled into the dust. The potential superfluities of production must be utilised in real economic scientific terms. Instead of division of labour, integration of labour should be proclaimed.

Let's take an example of division of labour: A man operating a machine in repetitive work day in day out becomes an automaton. He produces a nut and a bolt, a nut and a bolt, a nut and a bolt. Finally you don't know whether he is a nutter from the bolt factory or whether he has bolted from the nut factory. Integration of labour means alternating periods of working at diverse types of labour. Example: woodworking, engineering, laboratory work, agriculture and so on, creating a healthier and more creative mind. Our aim then should be not any "inexorable law" but the study of the ever-growing, developing, diversified needs of society and the individual. Economics must be a physiology of society analogous to the science of physiology pertaining to plants and animals. Francis Bacon, known as the father of the inductive deductive method of scientific research long since said: "Political economy must study the means of best satisfying the present and future needs of society with the least possible expenditure of human energy. I would say "with the least possible waste of human energy". A man's needs may embrace his aesthetic needs. He may wish to work different lengths of time at different



periods to satiate these aesthetic needs: individual tastes vary. Now dear reader I must close lest I should be tempted to indulge further in theoretical material. Allow me just one further paragraph.

In this country, the ultra-orthodox Marxists; The Socialist Party of Great Britain advocate the abolition of the wages system, free access to the means of wealth production, the abolition of the political state as the anarchists do. But and an important but, they want to abolish the state by capturing the state through putting an X on a ballot paper. So it would seem they are anarchists in bad health. On the question of capturing the State. Fred Engels writes.

"... the state is not abolished, it withers away." (Anti-Duhring pg.387)

Contrary to this, in our own contemporary history anyone with half an eye can observe that the tendency is for the State to develop muscle. In Marx's "Capital", Volume one, Engels writes a preface

"... meanwhile each succeeding winter brings up afresh the general question; what is to be done with the unemployed? But while the number of the unemployed keeps swelling from year to year there is nobody to answer the question; and we can almost calculate the moment when the unemployed, losing patience, will take their fate into their own hands. Surely at such a moment the voice ought to be heard of a man whose whole theory is the result of a life-long study of the economic history and condition of England and whom that study led to the conclusion that at least in Europe, England is the only country where the inevitable social revolution might be effected entirely by peaceful and legal means. He certainly never forgot to add that he hardly expected the English ruling classes to submit without a pro-slavery rebellion to this peaceful and legal revolution".

*Frederick Engels,  
(Das Kapital, Volume 1, p. XIV)*

At least this hypothesis is left open to conjecture and Marx should at least be congratulated for it. I end, dear reader, with a word of advice without meaning to be pedantic. Never accept what anyone says about any particular author without further investigation. Read the author yourself.